What Is Claimed Is:

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1. A communication system, comprising:

first storage means for storing a plurality of pieces of contents information;

second storage means for storing a plurality of pieces of contents information;

control means for accessing the contents information stored in said first storage means and said second storage means based on a single set of management information for managing the contents information stored in said first storage means and said second storage means;

communication means for interconnecting said first storage means, said second storage means and said control means for communication; and

accounting setting means for setting an amount of money to be imposed on a predetermined user in response to use of said first storage means or said second storage means.

2. A communication system according to claim 1, wherein said control means accesses the contents information stored at a predetermined physical address of each of said first storage means and said second storage means based on the single set of management information

described with a logical address corresponding to the physical address.

3. A communication system according to claim 2, further comprising selection means for selecting at least one of the plurality of pieces of contents information stored in said second storage means, and wherein said control means controls so that at least one of the plurality of pieces of contents information selected by said selection means may be copied or moved from said second storage means to said first storage means through said communication means.

4. A communication system according to claim 3, wherein said control means searches for a logical address of the management information corresponding to the at least one of the plurality of pieces of contents information selected by said selection means, converts the logical address into a physical address of said second storage means and accesses said second storage means based on the physical address.

5. A communication system according to claim 3, further comprising erasure means for erasing at least one of the plurality of pieces of contents information stored in said first storage means, and wherein said accounting setting means does not set, when, where a contents ID of

the contents information erased by said erasure means is managed with the management information, the contents information corresponding to the contents ID is transferred from said second storage means to said first storage means again by said control means, an amount of money to be imposed on a user who has issued a request for the transfer.

6. A communication system according to claim 3, further comprising erasure means for erasing at least one of the plurality of pieces of contents information stored in said first storage means, and wherein said accounting setting means sets, when, where a contents ID of the contents information erased by said erasure means is managed with the management information, the contents information corresponding to the contents ID is transferred from said second storage means to said first storage means again by said control means, a smaller amount of money to be imposed on a user who has issued a request for the transfer than a normal charge.

7. A communication system according to claim 1, wherein said accounting setting means sets an amount of money to be imposed on a user in accordance with a capacity of use of said second storage means by the user.

8. A communication system according to claim 7,

further comprising setting means for setting a capacity of use for said second storage means, and said accounting setting means sets the amount of money to be imposed on the user in accordance with the capacity of use of the user set by said setting means.

9. A communication system according to claim 8, wherein said setting means adaptively sets the capacity of use used by the user based on the management information for managing said second storage means, and said accounting setting means sets the amount of money to be imposed on the user in accordance with the capacity of use of the user set by said setting means.

10. A communication system according to claim 7, wherein said accounting setting means stores the amount of money to be imposed on the user in accordance with the capacity of use of said second storage means by the user into a database stored for each user in said second storage means.

11. A communication system according to claim 10, wherein said control means controls so that at least the imposed amount of money stored for each user in said database and an ID of the user are transmitted to an external settlement center.

12. A communication system according to claim 1,

further comprising authentication means for verifying an access to said second storage means by said control means.

13. A communication system according to claim 12, wherein said second storage means stores a plurality of user IDs, and said authentication means compares the user ID with which said second storage means is accessed and the plurality of user IDs to authenticate the user who has accessed said second storage means.

14. A communication method, comprising the steps of:

accessing contents information stored in first storage means and second storage means based on a single set of management information for managing the contents information stored in said first storage means and said second storage means; and

setting an amount of money to be imposed on a user of said first storage means or said second storage means in response to a capacity of use of said first storage means or said second storage means by the user.

15. A distribution apparatus, comprising:

storage means for storing a plurality of pieces of contents information;

communication means for connecting said distribution apparatus for communication to an external

apparatus; and

control means for accessing the contents information stored in said storage means based on management information for managing the contents information stored in said storage means in response to a user request from the external apparatus;

wherein said control means produces management information for each user in response to an access to the contents information in accordance with the user request and stores the produced management information into said storage means, the management information including at least an ID of the user and an address representative of a storage location of the contents information stored in said storage means.

16. A distribution apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising accounting setting means for setting an amount of money to be imposed on a user who requests for use of said storage means from the external apparatus in response to a capacity of use of said storage means by the user.

17. A distribution apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said control means accesses the contents information stored at a predetermined physical address of said storage means based on the management information

described with a logical address corresponding to the physical address.

18. A distribution apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said control means controls so that at least one of the plurality of pieces of contents information selected by the user by means of selection means of the external apparatus may be copied or moved from said storage means to the external apparatus through said communication means.

19. A distribution apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said control means searches for a logical address of the management information corresponding to the at least one of the plurality of pieces of contents information selected by the selection means, converts the logical address into a physical address of said storage means and accesses said storage means based on the physical address.

20. A distribution apparatus according to claim 18, wherein, when contents information stored in the external apparatus is erased and the contents ID is managed with the management information, said accounting setting means does not set, when the contents information corresponding to the contents ID is transferred from said storage means to the external apparatus again by said control means, an

amount of money to be imposed on a user who has issued a request for the transfer.

21. A distribution apparatus according to claim 18, wherein, when contents information stored in the external apparatus is erased and the contents ID is managed with the management information, said accounting setting means sets, when the contents information corresponding to the contents ID is transferred from said storage means to the external apparatus again by said control means, a smaller amount of money to be imposed on a user who has issued a request for the transfer than a normal charge.

22. A distribution apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said accounting setting means sets an amount of money to be imposed on a user in accordance with a capacity of use of said storage means by the user.

23. A distribution apparatus according to claim 22, further comprising setting means for setting a capacity of use for said storage means, and said accounting setting means sets the amount of money to be imposed on the user in accordance with the capacity of use of the user set by said setting means.

24. A distribution apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said setting means adaptively sets the capacity of use used by the user based on the management

information for managing said storage means, and said accounting setting means sets the amount of money to be imposed on the user in accordance with the capacity of use of the user set by said setting means.

25. A distribution apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said accounting setting means stores the amount of money to be imposed on the user in accordance with the capacity of use of said storage means by the user into a database stored for each user in said storage means.

26. A distribution apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said control means controls so that at least the imposed amount of money stored for each user in said database and an ID of the user are transmitted to an external settlement center.

27. A distribution apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising authentication means for verifying an access to said storage means by said control means.

28. A distribution apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said storage means stores a plurality of user IDs, and said authentication means compares the user ID with which said storage means is accessed and the plurality of user IDs to authenticate the user who has accessed said storage means.

29. A distribution method for distributing desired

contents information in response to a user request, comprising the steps of:

accessing the contents information stored in storage means based on management information for managing the contents information stored in said storage means in response to a user request from an external apparatus;

producing management information for each user in response to the access to the contents information; and

transmitting the accessed contents information to the external apparatus;

wherein the management information includes at least an ID of the user and an address representative of a storage location of the contents information stored in said storage means.

30. A terminal apparatus for receiving contents information from a distribution apparatus, comprising:

storage means for storing a plurality of pieces of contents information;

communication means for receiving a plurality of contents IDs stored in the distribution apparatus from the distribution apparatus and transmitting at least one contents ID to the distribution apparatus in response to a user request; and

control means for controlling said communication means to transmit at least one contents ID to the distribution apparatus in response to a user request and storing addresses corresponding to the contents IDs received from the distribution apparatus into said storage means;

wherein said control means controls said communication means to transmit the addresses stored in said storage means to the distribution apparatus when said terminal apparatus requests the distribution apparatus for contents information corresponding to the contents ID.

31. A terminal apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said control means stores a logical address corresponding to a predetermined physical address of a storage medium provided in the distribution apparatus at which contents information received in response to the user request by said communication means is stored into said storage means.

32. A terminal apparatus according to claim 31, wherein the logical address is included in a piece of management information which is used commonly by the distribution apparatus and said terminal apparatus.

33. A terminal apparatus according to claim 32,

wherein said control means extracts a logical address included in the management information corresponding to at least one contents ID in response to the user request and transmits the logical address to the distribution apparatus.

34. A terminal apparatus according to claim 30, further comprising selection means for selecting at least one of the plurality of contents IDs received by said communication means, and wherein said control means controls said communication means to transmit the at least one contents ID selected by said selection means to the distribution apparatus.

35. A communication method for receiving contents information from a distribution apparatus, comprising the steps of:

receiving a plurality of contents IDs stored in the distribution apparatus from the distribution apparatus;

transmitting at least one contents ID to the distribution apparatus in response to a user request;

storing addresses corresponding to the contents IDs received from the distribution apparatus into storage means; and

transmitting the addresses stored in said storage means to the distribution apparatus when a request to re-

send the contents information corresponding to any of the contents IDs is issued.

36. A communication system, comprising:

a terminal apparatus including first storage means for storing a plurality of pieces of contents information;

a distribution apparatus including second storage means for storing a plurality of pieces of contents information;

communication means for interconnecting said terminal apparatus and said distribution apparatus;

storage control means for placing a contents ID stored in said second storage means into right purchase information managed for each terminal apparatus and stored in said second storage means in response to a request from said terminal apparatus;

access control means for controlling accessing to contents information corresponding to the contents ID stored in said second storage means in response to the right purchase information; and

accounting setting means for setting an amount of money to be imposed on said terminal apparatus in response to the right purchase information.

37. A communication system according to claim 36,

wherein said access control means permits accessing to the contents information corresponding to the contents ID stored in said second storage means when the contents ID is included in the right purchase information.

38. A communication system according to claim 36, wherein said accounting setting means does not set, when, where a contents ID is placed in the right purchase information, the contents information corresponding to the contents ID stored in said second storage means is accessed by said access control means, an amount of money to be imposed on said terminal apparatus.

39. A communication system according to claim 36, wherein said storage control means stores access history information into said second storage means in response to accessing to the contents information by said access control means, and said accounting setting means sets an amount of money to be imposed on said terminal apparatus based on the access history information.

40. A communication system according to claim 36, wherein said distribution apparatus includes said storage control means.

41. A communication method between a distribution apparatus and a terminal apparatus, comprising the steps of:

placing a contents ID stored in storage means of said distribution apparatus into right purchase information managed for each terminal apparatus and stored in said storage means of said distribution apparatus in response to a request from said terminal apparatus;

controlling accessing to contents information corresponding to the contents ID stored in said storage means of said distribution apparatus in response to the right purchase information;

transmitting the contents information from said distribution apparatus to said terminal apparatus in response to the accessing; and

setting an amount of money to be imposed on said terminal apparatus in response to the right purchase information.

42. A distribution apparatus connected for communication to a terminal apparatus, comprising:

storage means for storing a plurality of pieces of contents information;

storage control means for placing a contents ID stored in said storage means into right purchase information managed for each terminal apparatus and stored in said storage means in response to a request

from said terminal apparatus;

access control means for controlling accessing to contents information corresponding to the contents ID stored in said storage means in response to the right purchase information; and

accounting setting means for setting an amount of money to be imposed on said terminal apparatus in response to the right purchase information.

43. A communication system wherein a terminal apparatus, a distribution terminal apparatus and a server apparatus are interconnected for communication, comprising:

a first storage medium provided in said server apparatus for storing a plurality of pieces of contents information;

a second storage medium provided in said distribution terminal apparatus for storing a plurality of pieces of contents information;

a third storage medium provided in said terminal apparatus for storing a plurality of pieces of contents information; and

a controller for controlling accessing to any one of said first, second and third storage media based on management information for managing contents information

stored in at least two of said first, second and third storage media with a single logical memory map.

44. A communication system according to claim 43, wherein the management information includes first management information for managing the contents information stored in said first storage medium and said second storage medium with a single logical memory map, and second management information for managing the contents information stored in said second storage medium and said third storage medium with another single logical memory map.

45. A communication system according to claim 43, wherein the management information includes shared management information for managing the contents information stored in said first, second and third storage media with a single logical memory map.

46. A communication system according to claim 44, wherein the first management information is stored in storage means of at least one of said server apparatus and said distribution terminal apparatus, and the second management information is stored in storage means of at least one of said distribution terminal apparatus and said terminal apparatus.

47. A communication system according to claim 43,

wherein said controller accesses the contents information stored at a predetermined physical address of each of said first and second storage media based on the management information described with a logical address corresponding to the physical address.

48. A communication system according to claim 47, further comprising a selection section for selecting the contents information stored in said first storage medium or said second storage medium in response to a user request to said terminal apparatus, and wherein said controller searches for a logical address of the management information corresponding to the at least one of the plurality of pieces of contents information selected by said selection section, converts the logical address into a physical address of said first storage medium or said second storage medium and accesses said first storage medium or said second storage medium based on the physical address.

49. A communication system according to claim 43, wherein said first storage medium is a hard disk and said third storage medium is a semiconductor memory.

50. A communication system according to claim 43, wherein the contents information is digital audio data.

51. A communication system according to claim 50,

wherein the digital audio data is compressed data.

52. A communication system according to claim 51, wherein the digital audio data is data compressed in the ATRAC format.